

# Intangible Cultural Heritage Update

News and notes on  
Newfoundland and Labrador's  
Intangible Cultural  
Heritage Program

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## Heart's Content Registered Heritage District

On Saturday afternoon, July 20th, 2013, as part of Heart's Content Heritage Day, the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (HFNL) will celebrate the designation of the Heart's Content Provincial Registered Heritage District and will unveil a plaque recognizing this designation.

"Historic districts are geographically defined areas which create a special sense of time and place," says Frank Crews, Chairperson, HFNL. "Above all, a historic district of provincial significance must have a 'sense of history', minimal intrusive elements, and the district's historic characteristics must predominate."

The origins of the Heart's Content heritage district date to 1866 when a transatlantic communications cable was successfully landed in the community. Included in the district are staff houses built by the Anglo-American Telegraph Company and Western Union Telegraph Company as well as buildings associated with the development of the community such as Heyfield Memorial United Church, the Methodist School and the Society of United Fishermen (SUF) Hall.

The application for the designation of the district by HFNL was made jointly by the Town of Heart's Content and the Mizzen Heritage Society. The plaque will be unveiled on the grounds of the Mizzen Heritage Community Museum at 2 o'clock pm on July 20th.

The day will also serve as the launch of the "So Many Stories, So Many Traditions" oral history booklet that was compiled between fall 2012 and spring 2013. The booklet launch will take place at a reception at the SUF hall following the plaque unveiling. Both events are free and open to the public.

*Photo: Rug hooking of the Arnott House, in the heritage district, made by Judy Arnott.*

## Weaving in the Woods

*By Nicole Penney*

*Photography by Jonathan Dooling*

Over the past year I have been busy developing public programming with the Intangible Cultural Heritage Office, particularly around pillow tops. Woven with wool on wooden frames, these textiles were crafted by lumber camp workers. I was invited by Connie Penton and Penny Houlden of The Rooms Corporation to work with the staff at both the The Logger's Life and Mary March Provincial Museums in Grand Falls-Windsor. I travelled to the area to train the staff of each museum on how to make this traditional craft. The staff then put these skills to work as we instructed a community workshop the next day.



Connie suggested we provide the workshops at the Logger's Life Museum bunkhouse and this was a fantastic experience. The museum provides visitors with a glimpse into the lives of early 20th century loggers through interpretive panels and a reconstructed logging camp that includes the bunkhouse, cook house, filer's shack, barn and forge. Along the footpaths and trails leading to each structure are various tools that were used for cutting, peeling and transporting lumber.

While sitting on long wooden benches we wove our pillow tops to the natural light of the bunkhouse, the scent of mosquito coils and tree boughs hanging thick in the warm air. Artifacts such as snowshoes, washboards and forms for making boots adorned the walls. While weaving we bobbed in and around flannel shirts, trousers and heavy knitted vamps hanging on a wooden rack, as if they had just come off the lumbermen to dry. Weaving pillow tops in the bunkhouse was a very memorable experience, but another treat was getting to see a vintage weaving frame. Theresa Greene, who works with the Logger's Life and Mary March Museums, brought along this artifact from the Millertown Museum, an item they had yet to identify. I concluded that it was indeed a square weaving frame, possibly used to make pillow tops in the lumber camp in that area. Theresa decided to make her pillow top on this frame and the end result was a beautiful bed of dusty rose pom poms that laid flat like fuzzy little flowers.

The public event went very well with a half dozen ladies from the community coming out to the Logger's Life Museum to try their hand at this traditional craft. I have noticed that some participants are slightly apprehensive at first, as the pillow tops appear to be more challenging than they actually are. And they are an odd looking item, not always what one expects. However, I notice that once we get into it, our participants' enthusiasm quickly grows. By the end of the workshops, people are planning their next pillow top projects and begin to brainstorm colour schemes and how they will make use of their pillow tops around the house. Many of our pillow top workshop participants have "never made anything like this before" and leave with a sense of pride upon making something with their hands. We are simply happy to share the knowledge of this craft with communities in the hope that the intangible cultural heritage of this traditional weaving activity will be passed along to future generations.

If you're interested in having a pillow top workshop in your community please get in touch with Nicole Penney at [nicole@heritagefoundation.ca](mailto:nicole@heritagefoundation.ca) or 1-888-739-1892 ex.6



## The Lovely Water: Wells and Springs in Newfoundland

*By Sarah Ingram*

*Photos by Claire McDougall*

Wells, springs, and other natural water sources are often the oldest pieces of human heritage in a community still in use today. Water is one of the most valuable resources, and having access to it and knowing how to maintain it is an important tradition. Early colonists in the 17th century looked for water sources first, and some surviving documentation portrays how surprising and important finding fresh, drinkable water was. This summer, I will be working with the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador researching wells, springs, and the stories and traditions surrounding them here in Newfoundland.

Here in Newfoundland and Labrador today, there are a surprisingly high number of traditional water sources in use, despite the growing availability of piped city water. They are sometimes “true” wells (holes dug in the ground and walled with rocks), pools kept open by generations of users, barrels sunk into boggy ground or pond-sides, or springs where water runs out of the ground naturally. Many of these are still used today, for different reasons, and there is a rich heritage surrounding them.

Over the past two weeks I took a dive into the history of spring and well use and where they are or used to be here in St. John’s. As I talk to people and visit new places, I am excited for the possibility this project holds. Although the original focus was in and around St. John’s, memories about wells and even locations are taking me to Ocean Pond, Clarkes Beach, Cape Broyle, Bristol’s Hope, and Twillingate. I have received photographs of wells and springs from Grand Falls Windsor and Gander Bay, and have been contacted by water dowsers and water witches willing to share their craft with me. I have found old photos of women carrying buckets with hoops, read stories about gathering at natural springs to cool off from the summer heat, and even came across a city ordinance threatening jail time and a fine if the communal cup was stolen from a public well.



Where people get their water, what they use it for, and why are full of traditions and cultural meanings, whether it’s recognized as such or not. Traditional knowledge is widespread in the province, and traditional watering places have often been imbued with layers of meaning. Most wells, both public and private, are treated by local people as special and nearly sacred spaces that should be protected from despoiling. Many have oral history associated with them. This collection of information about wells and springs will preserve and protect the memories surrounding these traditional water sources. Some traditions I have heard so far include keeping a trout in your well for good luck and cleaning, having specific water sources for tea because it tastes better, and some rumored stories about cows and drunks being conquered by a well.

This project will be continuing until October 2013, when we hope to use the information gathered to help improve and preserve the understanding of traditional water use, help the provincial government better assist areas with water issues, and hopefully even save an older well or two. We are well on our way to getting things rolling, but we really want to hear from you, and how you remember using water, and what traditions or folklore surround them. If you have a well, used to gather water from a spring, can find water sources with a twig or stick, or even have a memory, I would love to talk to you! If you have something to share, please contact me, Sarah at [sarah@heritagefoundation.ca](mailto:sarah@heritagefoundation.ca), or call 1 709 739 1892 ext 7.

# The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Program and the question of honoraria for Elders

*By Claire McDougall*

In 2007, Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (TCR) began developing a working strategy on Intangible Cultural Heritage. One of the results of the strategy created was the establishment of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Program (ACHP), which "supports Aboriginal initiatives that involve the safeguarding of the traditions and culture."<sup>1</sup> The program has been running for six years and, in that time, fifty-seven projects have been granted funding. The Department of TCR is currently conducting a review of the program, looking at its strengths and weaknesses, in an effort to ensure program funding is as accessible and effective as it can be. One of our aims is to create guidelines for potential applicants to the program, which will enable them to craft the strongest proposals and projects possible.

In aid of creating this policy document, I have been doing some research regarding the question of honoraria for Elders. Elders, as guardians of traditional knowledge, play a key role in the projects for which funding is sought through ACHP. One challenge that has arisen for applicants to the program is that of budgeting for honoraria. It is a part of the role of Elders to share their knowledge, their teachings, with their community. Traditionally, a community will give a gift of some kind in return, not in payment but as a gesture of respect and gratitude. The value and nature of such a gift can vary enormously depending on the service provided by the Elder and the means of the community in question. How then should a cultural organization present honoraria as numbers in a budget?

I have spoken with some of the myriad cultural and educational bodies across the province, and throughout Canada, that draw on the skills and knowledge of Aboriginal Elders. As the organizations in question vary, so to do the ways in which they engage with Elders. Regarding the question of honoraria paid to Elders for their time and expertise, there is a broad range of practices – from a school board that pays \$25 for an hour-long classroom session, to a cultural centre that pays up to \$1200 a day for an Elder acting as a consultant. The vast majority of organizations, however, fall within a fairly narrow range. It seems to be standard practice, from coast to coast, to pay an honorarium of between \$100 and \$200 for a workshop/ceremony. The time commitment for a session of this nature ranges from one and a half or two hours to a full day.

It is our hope that these numbers may provide a useful point of reference for grant applicants, a guide to be used with discretion and an open mind. Many organizations stress the flexible nature of honoraria given to Elders. Some groups recommend giving a gift instead of a cash honorarium, or in addition to it. Ceremonial gifts, such as a tobacco tie or pouch, or a blanket, are quite common. What has become clear to me while doing this research is the difficulty of trying to quantify an exchange that is based on the ideas of mutual respect and caring, of trying to represent it in a budget. If we hope to craft guidelines for ACHP applicants that are practical, and adaptable to different situations and communities, we will have to ensure that we are sensitive to this contradiction.

<sup>1</sup> Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Program*, [http://www.tcr.gov.nl.ca/tcr/heritage/aboriginal\\_cultural\\_heritage\\_program.html](http://www.tcr.gov.nl.ca/tcr/heritage/aboriginal_cultural_heritage_program.html).

*Photo: Conne River Powwow Dancer, 2009, by Dale Jarvis.*

